

time for recrimination or finger-pointing. As a matter of fact, I would like to draw the attention to the superb job that has been done by the Coast Guard. I have not heard one suggestion of criticism of the Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard, which has in our Nation's history a unique status of being both a civilian operation and a military operation, often is left in the shadows as we look to the other military establishments in this country. But the remarkable job done by the Coast Guard, particularly the work done by the helicopter pilots and those who are working with the pilots to rescue hundreds and literally thousands of people in the affected area, is something of which we should be proud, something of which we should be joyous; and it suggests to me that we should take another look at the way in which we have taken for granted the tremendous efforts made by the Coast Guard.

As we look forward in analyzing what occurred and what is occurring now, we ensure that as we make plans for the future, we equip the Coast Guard with everything that the Coast Guard needs to be able to carry out its functions, the traditional function which we have seen over the past week, and the new responsibility we have given them in the war on terrorism.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss as someone who spent 8 years as the chief law enforcement officer of the State of California if I did not remark on what I observed with the breakdown in order that we saw in the city of New Orleans.

Quite simply, when we have a situation in which law enforcement stands by and allows looting to take place with the excuse that it is only for food and water, one should understand that if we say looting is okay for food and water, we will ensure that only the strong get the food and the water and the weak will not.

It was not the weak that were breaking into those places and taking that home; it was, rather, those who were healthy and those who were able to go in and do that, and I doubt that they were running back to assist those who were far less fortunate.

When you suggest that that breakdown in order is allowable, what you do is suggest to the criminal community that they can do more, and we saw the spiraling from food and water to clothes, to appliances, and finally to guns and ammunition; and we saw terrible tragedy that ensued that was man-made, not as the result of the terrible forces of the hurricane and the terrible forces of the flooding that took place thereafter, but rather those who would take advantage of that tragedy for their own purposes.

My only suggestion, Mr. Speaker, is that it ought to be a lesson for all of us, all of us, that when we are confronted with tragedies of this sort, whether they are man-made or natural, we must understand the importance of order being maintained.

While some may believe it is in a sense of generosity or a sense of empathy to say that looting is okay for selected purposes, we should understand that ultimately it does the greatest damage to those who need our help the most, the least among us, the weakest among us, those who cannot fend for themselves.

So as we sort things out and as we in this Congress look for those things that are necessary for the Federal Government to do related to the State and local governments, we should understand that we need to have order in the midst of chaos to the extent we can so that we can ensure that our efforts are made to protect those who are least able to protect themselves. It is a terrible lesson that we had to learn once again, but it is a lesson that we ought to embrace and a lesson that we ought to utilize to assist us in any future problem.

We have many things to look at over the next few weeks as we continue in response to this terrible tragedy, but I would hope that we would understand that those who are the least among us, those who are the weakest among us, need the support from the strongest, and that in very real terms necessitates every effort to protect order.

EMERGENCY ACTIONS NEEDED TO ADDRESS SKYROCKETING ENERGY PRICES

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, our hearts go out to all of the victims in Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi; and we in Congress stand committed to ensuring that we rebuild each of those families' hopes and dreams. But, unfortunately, during this time of crisis, I am very, very concerned that the American driving public is being gouged at the pump by Big Oil and by OPEC, which has been taking advantage of this crisis in our country. I am very concerned that Big Oil is exploiting this tragedy by tipping consumers upside down at the pump and shaking money out of their pockets. This is no time to take advantage of the American consumer. This is a time for the oil companies, as well as OPEC, to rally to the protection of the American consumer and the American economy.

We have all been disturbed by the television footage of looters ransacking stores and homes in New Orleans, but it also appears that Big Oil is engaging in widespread looting as it runs up the price of gasoline paid by the driving public.

We need action by this administration. They have to make it clear that they are going to put in effect immediately investigations, put investigators in the field, in the board rooms, to make sure that people understand that this kind of exploitation of the American consumer will not be tolerated.

Unfortunately, right after 9/11, the very same oil companies took advantage of the American consumer, resulting ultimately in large fines having to be paid by oil companies for their exploitation of the American consumer in the immediate aftermath of 9/11.

Also the President should demand that OPEC help us at this time. OPEC has announced that they will take up the issue of producing more oil at their September 19 meeting. September 19? When Saddam Hussein was threatening the Middle East, we did not say to our friends, Call us next month. We said we would respond immediately.

OPEC, led by Saudi Arabia, should announce that they are going to produce 1.5 million to 2 million barrels of oil a day beginning today, not waiting until some September 19 meeting. And the President, who held the hand of the Saudi prince in April at his ranch in Crawford, should now hold OPEC's feet to the fire and ensure that, as they are now saying they may have a surplus of 1.5 million to 2 million barrels of oil a day to produce, and they may consider releasing it all.

They should have done that back in April, when the price of gasoline was already skyrocketing. We should not be at a point where a barrel of oil is at \$65 a barrel, now approaching \$70 and going higher. All of that has happened subsequent to Katrina, this additional spike.

So we need a response from OPEC. We can no longer allow them to sit on the sidelines with this additional 1.5 million to 2 million barrels of oil that they are going to consider releasing on September 19.

In addition, the President should immediately suspend all royalty relief for the oil and gas companies for drilling on public lands, the Secretary of Interior should require the oil companies to pay the full royalty for drilling and extracting oil and gas from public lands, and those revenues should be earmarked for the victims of this enormous disaster. That is where those revenues should go. And the President and this Congress should enact a windfall profits tax on the oil industry, and the proceeds should go to the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program for this coming winter, the neediest people in our society, who are going to be most adversely affected by these skyrocketing energy prices.

But we just have to look in the rear-view mirror 5 weeks ago when this Congress and President Bush passed and then signed a historic energy bill that was a failure in dealing with increase in fuel economy standards for SUVs, encouraging renewable energy resources that would be used by the utilities in this country. Instead, we gave tax breaks to the oil and gas industries of our country. It is time we got something back from those industries. It is time for this Congress and this President to stand up.